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STATUS REPORT

SPAY AND NEUTER CLINIC PROGRAM

no fly

APRIL, 1974

PREPARED BY THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL REGULATION

*Municipal Admin Pounds
City planning Nuisance abatement*

Robert I. Rush
General Manager

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PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Department of Animal Regulation has established by actual experience that a Spay and Neuter Clinic Program is an effective and modern concept of animal population control necessary to protect the health and welfare of the community. It has established that this Program not only is feasible, but a necessary function of a total animal care and control program designed to cope with a serious environmental problem. It is the only positive alternative until nonsurgical means of animal sterilization, utilized under proper controls, is made available to the general public.

These conclusions, supported by the Los Angeles City Council and Mayor, have resulted in the expansion of the City's pilot public low cost Spay and Neuter Clinic Program established under Ordinance No. 143,123 (See Appendix I). Under the pilot program, a clinic was established at the Ann Street Animal Shelter to extend from February 17, 1971, through June 30, 1972. Authorization, effective July 1, 1972, was granted not only to enlarge the staff at the Ann Street pilot clinic, but to establish additional clinics with the enlarged staff at two district animal shelters serving widely separated areas of the City. A new clinic was opened on May 18, 1973, at the Eleventh Avenue Shelter in South Central Los Angeles and on June 1, 1973, at the East Valley Shelter in North Hollywood in the San Fernando Valley.



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Program Concept

The basic concept of the program has always been to provide these surgical services to cat and dog owners at the lowest cost possible and yet maintain the highest possible medical standards. The program is designed to operate on a break-even basis; however, public funds are appropriated on an annual basis to meet expenses. These funds are replaced by the revenues derived during the year. Because public funds and public facilities are used, there are no eligibility requirements imposed, other than City residency, upon the pet owner.

Eligibility Requirements

Aside from residency, the only eligibility requirements imposed upon participants are imposed upon the animals themselves. They are: the animal must be at least six months old; no females will be spayed while pregnant, lactating or in heat; all dogs must be licensed; and must be medically fit to undergo surgery.

Pre and Post-Operative Requirements

Procedurally, the program participant must telephone for an appointment for a pre-surgical examination which is scheduled at least 10 days prior to the date of surgery. At the time of examination, the fee of \$17.50 for an ovariohysterectomy or \$11.50 for a castration is paid and, if the animal qualifies for surgery, it is vaccinated (cats for pneumonitis and panleukopenia; dogs for distemper-hepatitis-leptosprosis). The fees noted are the total costs to the owner and include: surgery; vaccinations; overnight care; and emergency service at any hour should complications arise. However, an additional cost of \$3.50 per day is imposed upon those owners that do not pick up their animal after surgery when they are scheduled to do so. The pet owner then returns the animal to the clinic on the afternoon prior to the scheduled date of surgery and, normally, picks it up on the afternoon following surgery. Thus, the animal is under our care for a period of one night.

Private Versus Public

Comparative considerations relative to the costs of, and the services provided, by the City of Los Angeles and those of a private veterinarian are indicated hereinafter (Appendix II). However, it must be noted that the private practitioners economic achievement is strongly influenced by two elements: public evaluation of the worth of his services; and his own personal evaluation and belief of that same worth. Consequently, fees among these practitioners may vary and seem to be based upon: tradition; average charges for a given area; estimates of hourly rates; and other general considerations.

- a. EXAMINATION (Pre-surgical): A thorough examination is provided for each surgical candidate by both surgical teams.

1. City - Costs included in the fee hereinabove noted.
No charge if patient is rejected because of
any discovered ailment that might adversely
affect the outcome of surgery.

2. Practitioner - A charge is involved for female cats
or dogs regardless of whether the
animal is accepted or rejected, because
of the time spent.

b. IMMUNIZATION: Immunizations noted hereinabove are required
by both surgical teams.

1. City - Costs included in the fee hereinabove noted.

2. Practitioner - Fees separate and apart from regular
surgical fees.

c. ADMISSION:

1. City - Residence requirement for pet owner.

2. Practitioner - Varies. As a rule costs are not a
factor.

d. SURGERY:

Surgery provided in the clinic is equal to, or above, most
private practitioners. However, experience in the clinic
based upon age level of the animals, general condition and
size, indicates that surgical fees for practitioners are
considerably higher.

e. HOSPITALIZATION (Post Surgical):

1. City - Care is on a continuous basis relative to
personnel in attendance and on call 24 hours
a day.

2. Practitioner - Varies. Limited care in many pri-
vate veterinary facilities.

f. EMERGENCY SERVICES:

1. City - Available on a 24-hour, seven days a week
basis if required.

2. Practitioner - Limited services in many private
veterinary facilities.

g. POST-OPERATIVE CARE: Services relative to removal of sutures and examination after surgery.

1. City - No charge. In case of post-operative complications, additional surgery or repair is accomplished without additional fees.
2. Practitioner - Variable costs are involved depending upon the situation and the veterinarian.

Evaluation of the factors noted indicate substantial monetary savings realized by pet owners participating in the Spay and Neuter Clinic Program. These are summarized as follows:

SUMMARY OF DIRECT MONETARY SAVINGS TO CLINIC PARTICIPANTS

	<u>Savings</u>	
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Spay (Ovariohysterectomy) Canine	\$27.50	\$140.00
Spay (Ovariohysterectomy) Feline	27.50	85.50
Castration (Orchiectomy) Canine	28.50	96.00
Castration (Orchiectomy) Feline	23.50	71.50

Expanded Program

The Department of Animal Regulation was authorized by the Los Angeles City Council and Mayor to expand the Spay and Neuter Clinic Program in Fiscal Year 1972-73. Expansion included the construction of two new clinics, each costing \$87,000, and made available to the City on a lease-purchase option basis. The air-conditioned clinics, serving the San Fernando Valley and the South Central Los Angeles area where pet populations are heavy, are identical in design. Each facility has 2700 feet of floor space with three surgical rooms, a recovery room, an X-ray room, a reception area and three veterinary offices. Stainless steel cages are installed in the recovery rooms. Each recovery room is capable of accomodating seventy animals. The surgical equipment is the finest available. In the continued expansion of the Los Angeles Spay and Neuter Clinic Program in 1974, the City funded and authorized replacement of the original Spay and Neuter Clinic at the Ann Street Animal Shelter, bringing it to a standard comparable with the two new facilities built in 1973.

Assessment of Spay-Neuter Clinic Program

The Department of Animal Regulation's three large scale Spay and Neuter Clinic facilities are operating at a total cost, including overhead, of approximately \$301,567 for fiscal year 1973-74 (See Appendix III), with clinic productivity estimated at 13,500 surgeries. Several unpredictable

developments, such as recruitment problems and clinic personnel turnover and unexpected delays in the construction of clinic facilities temporarily slowed program progress or the number of surgeries would have been substantially greater. Nevertheless, the clinic program is now flourishing with public participation causing backlogs on surgery calendars at all three clinics.

For the second successive time in two years since the inception of the Los Angeles public Spay and Neuter Clinic Program, a reduction of animals impounded and destroyed by the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation was recorded in fiscal 1972-73. An 8.5 percent decrease in impoundment was recorded in 1971-72, and a 3.6 percent decrease was reflected in 1972-73. A 5.9 percent decrease in animals destroyed was posted in 1971-72, and a 6.2 percent decrease in animals destroyed was shown in 1972-73. A decrease of 4,700 (3.6 percent) animals handled at the City's six animal shelters was reflected in the 1972-73 total.

Recent comparative figures show that the Los Angeles City Shelter system processed 144,530 animals in 1970-71; 132,254 in 1971-72; and 127,554 in 1972-73. In the area of animals destroyed in the shelter system, the figures are 110,835 in 1970-71; 104,303 in 1971-72; and 97,818 in 1972-73.

The decreases cited above in the areas of animals impounded and animals destroyed cannot be attributed solely to the public low cost Spay and Neuter Clinic Program. Other input factors include stricter enforcement of the leash law made possible by additional personnel in the field; the differential in the dog license fee structure; and a sharper sense of pet ownership responsibility stimulated by public education.

It is noteworthy, however, that the positive reduction trends in animal control in Los Angeles (City) have occurred with the inception of the public Spay-Neuter Clinic Program.

The 1972-73 fiscal year was the first full year in which an evaluation could be made on the effectiveness of the public low cost Spay and Neuter Program as related to the new dog license price differential - \$7 for the unaltered dog, and \$3.50 for the altered dog. The license fee differential was initiated November 15, 1971, to provide an incentive for pet owners to alter their pets in the interest of personal economy and containment of pet propagation. In fiscal 1971-72, altered dogs receiving licenses numbered 27,684. In the 1972-73 fiscal year, the number of altered dogs issued licenses jumped to 59,231. This impressive statistic in just a year's time must be viewed in terms of residual monetary benefits in future animal control costs.

In a more immediate residual benefit, related to licensing, the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation requires that all persons bringing their dogs to the clinics must have their dogs licensed. In the experience of the department, most of the dogs brought to the clinics are not licensed. Accordingly, a license fee is charged. This results in direct revenue to the City but the revenue is not reflected in the clinic revenue area, per se.

In the area of patient attrition, the mortality rate in the clinic system is .004 of one percent.

Program Staffing

Each clinic is staffed with two veterinarians, two veterinary assistants and one clerk-receptionist. Staff salaries approximate \$20,500 for veterinarians; \$12,000 for veterinary assistants; and \$8,000 for receptionists. The duties and requirements for the position of a veterinarian are as detailed below:

DUTIES

A veterinarian diagnoses and gives first-aid treatment to animals in custody of the Department of Animal Regulation and inspects their care and treatment. Veterinarians also perform surgery in City spay and neuter clinics.

REQUIREMENTS

- a. Graduation from a school of veterinary medicine recognized by the Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine of the State of California, and two years of full-time paid professional experience in the practice of veterinary medicine.
- b. One year of graduate study in veterinary medicine or a closely related field may be substituted for one year of the required experience.
- c. A valid license to practice veterinary medicine issued by the California Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine is desirable at the time of appointment. Candidates not possessing this license may file for the examination, but must obtain the California license within 12 months from the date of appointment. (Reference California Business and Professional Code.)
- d. New City employees will be required to be City residents within 18 months after appointment.

Application of the Spay and Neuter Program to Other Communities

The Spay and Neuter Clinic Program, as presented and projected by the Department of Animal Regulation in this report, can be applied in a lesser or greater degree and in a wide variety of sound applications by most communities with sufficient animal population required to sustain the program. However, most communities will fail to achieve the full value of a program of this type unless it is augmented by an effective animal care and control program. Most important of these supporting programs are as follows:

- a. Differential in dog license fees which provides an incentive to the dog owner to have his dog spayed or neutered.
- b. Humane animal education program to increase animal owner responsibility in the grades kindergarten through six.

- c. Law enforcement programs to achieve full compliance with all laws and ordinances.
- d. An aggressive public relations program with accent on the need for spaying and neutering.

APPENDIX I

Ordinance No. 141,123

An Ordinance amending Article 3 of Chapter 5 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code by adding Section 53.31 thereto to provide for a public spay and neuter clinic for dogs and cats.

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS

Section 1. Article 3 of Chapter 5 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby amended by adding Section 53.31 thereto, said new section to read:
SEC. 53.31. PUBLIC SPAY AND NEUTER CLINIC:

(a) Authority for Clinic and Fees.

The General Manager is hereby authorized and empowered to establish a clinic at which members of the public may have dogs and cats spayed or neutered in a humane manner upon payment of the following fees:

1. For spaying a female dog or cat \$17.50
2. For neutering a male dog or cat \$11.50

(b) Consent Form and Waiver.

Persons submitting dogs or cats for the above service shall sign a consent form certifying thereon under penalty of perjury that they are the owner of said animals or are otherwise authorized to present the animal for the above operation and such persons may be required to furnish proof of such ownership or authority.

Such consent shall contain a waiver of any and all liability of the City, the Department of Animal Regulation and any City employees for any injury or death to an animal arising out of the aforementioned operation or any services provided incidental thereto.

(c) Board and Care Charge.

The department shall establish a return date by which persons submitting animals for the above operation shall pick up said animals or be subject to a reasonable board and care fee to commence the day after such return date.

Failure to pick up an animal within 15 days of said return date shall be deemed abandonment of such animal and the General Manager may dispose of it by sale or destruction.

Sec. 2. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and cause the same to be published in some daily newspaper printed and published in the City of Los Angeles.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was passed by the Council of the City of Los Angeles, at its meeting of September 30, 1970.

REX E. LAYTON,

City Clerk.

By Charles J. Port, Deputy

Approved October 8, 1970.

SAM YORTY,
Mayor.

File Nos. 143,354 and 145,326 Sup. #1
(1979643) Oct 19 11

Spay and Neuter Clinic Program
Clinic Program - Private Veterinarian Comparison

SPAY (Ovariohysterectomy) CANINE

	<u>L.A. Clinic Charges</u>	<u>Private Vet. Charges</u>	
Examination (accepted)	Inclusive	Inclusive	
(rejected)	Inclusive	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
		\$ 5.00	\$10.00
Immunization	Inclusive	10.00	22.50
Admission	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Surgery	\$17.50	\$20.00	\$75.00
Hospitalize Overnight	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Discharge Patient	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Emergency Service	Inclusive	Limited	
Post Operative Care	Inclusive	Inclusive	
(with complications)	<u>Inclusive</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$50.00</u>
 TOTAL COST	 \$17.50	 \$45.00	 \$157.50

SPAY (Ovariohysterectomy) FELINE

	<u>L.A. Clinic Charges</u>	<u>Private Vet. Charges</u>	
Examination (accepted)	Inclusive	Inclusive	
(rejected)	Inclusive	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
		\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
Immunization	Inclusive	10.00	18.00
Admission	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Surgery	\$17.50	\$20.00	\$40.00
Hospitalize Overnight	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Discharge Patient	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Emergency Service	Inclusive	Limited	
Post Operative Care	Inclusive	Inclusive	
(with complications)	<u>Inclusive</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$40.00</u>
 TOTAL COST	 \$17.50	 \$45.00	 \$103.00

CASTRATION (Orchidectomy) CANINE

	<u>L.A. Clinic Charges</u>	<u>Private Vet. Charges</u>	
Examination (accepted)	Inclusive	Inclusive	
(rejected)	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Immunization	Inclusive	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
		\$10.00	\$22.50
Admission	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Surgery	\$11.50	\$20.00	\$35.00
Hospitalize Overnight	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Discharge Patient	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Emergency Service	Inclusive	Limited	
Post Operative Care	<u>Inclusive</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$50.00</u>
 TOTAL COST	 \$11.50	 \$40.00	 \$107.50

CASTRATION (Orchidectomy) FELINE

	<u>L.A. Clinic Charges</u>	<u>Private Vet. Charges</u>	
Examination (accepted)	Inclusive	Inclusive	
(rejected)	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Immunization	Inclusive	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
		\$10.00	\$18.00
Admission	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Surgery	\$11.50	\$15.00	\$25.00
Hospitalize Overnight	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Discharge Patient	Inclusive	Inclusive	
Emergency Service	Inclusive	Limited	
Post Operative Care	<u>Inclusive</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$40.00</u>
 TOTAL COST	 \$11.50	 \$35.00	 \$83.00

APPENDIX III

ESTIMATED COST OF 1973-74 SPAY AND NEUTER CLINICS

Salaries	\$184,800	
Expense	57,364	
Equipment	<u>4,031</u>	
Total Direct Costs		\$246,195
Overhead:		
Retirement (8.12%)	\$ 15,005	
Health (\$20.70/month/employee)	3,726	
Workman's Compensation (.27%)	500	
Building Maintenance (approx. \$1.91/sq.ft./yr. - reception area only)	1,500	
Office Equipment Maintenance	100	
Water and Electricity	2,230	
Communication Services	3,000	
Departmental Administration	<u>14,951</u>	
		41,012
		<u>\$287,207</u>
General City Overhead (5%)		<u>14,360</u>
Total Estimated Cost		<u>\$301,567</u>

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